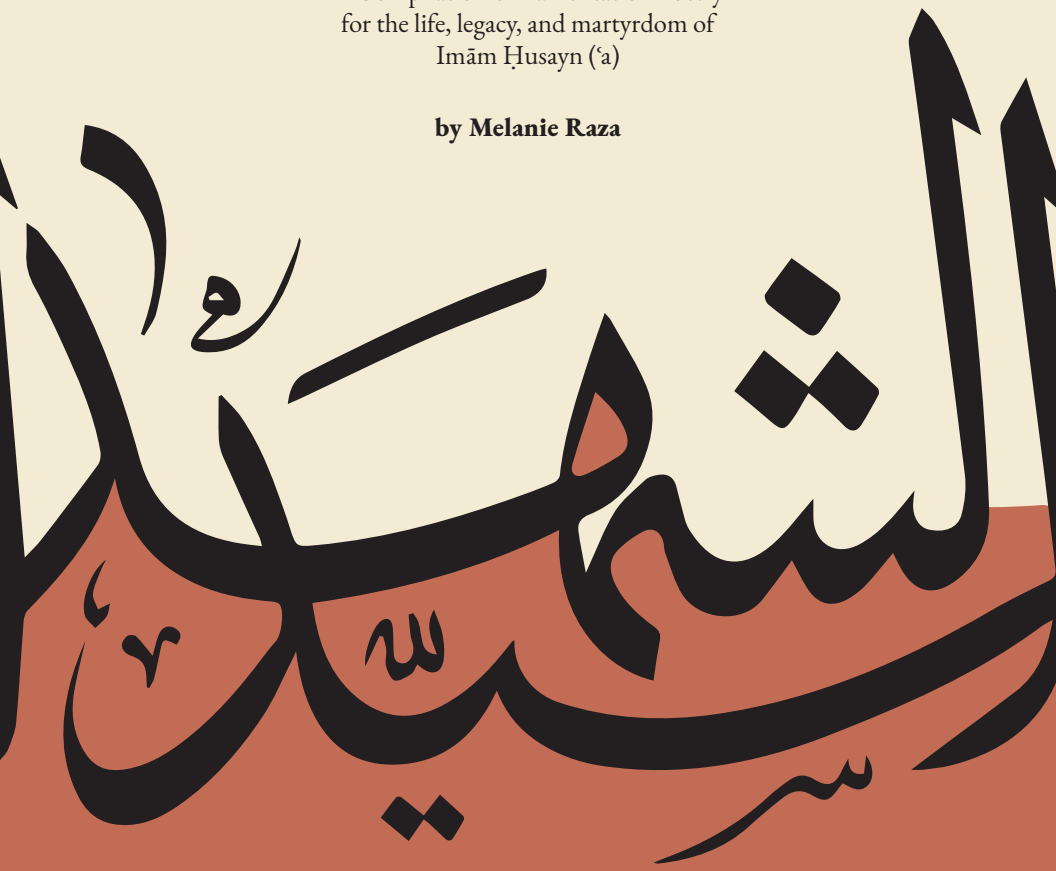
The Whispers of Ḥusayn

A Compilation of Lamentation Poetry
for the life, legacy, and martyrdom of
Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa)

by Melanie Raza



AL-KISA FOUNDATION
UNDER THE CLOAK OF GUIDANCE AND MERCY

Under the Guidance of
Moulana Nabi R. Mir (Abidi)

لبيك يا حسين عليه السلام

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Dedications

This book is dedicated to Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and the beloved Imām of our time (ʿaj). May Allah (swt) hasten his reappearance and help us to become his true companions.

Marḥūmīn Dedication

Please recite a Sūrah al-Fātiḥah for the marḥūmīn of the Mohsen and Raza families, especially Marḥūm[ah] Farida Mohsen, Madeline Santora, Victor Santora, Syed Ahmed Raza Zaidi, Syed Muhammad Raza Rizvi, and Jeffery McKay.

Acknowledgements

Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ):
On the Day of Resurrection, the ink of the scholars will be weighed up against the blood of the martyrs, and the ink of the scholars will be heavier than the blood of the martyrs.
- *Nahj al-Faṣāḥah*, Saying #3222

True reward lies with Allah (swt), but I would like to sincerely thank Sr. Naadira Muhibullah for her endless encouragement, my beloved parents, my dearest friends, my sisters who have read every poem I've written, and my husband with whom I've had the honor to read these poems in front of the shrine of Imām Ḥusayn ('a). All poems are entirely my own work and are subject to copyright. You may discover more poetry on Instagram at @Mawaddah_byMel.

This book would not have been possible without the photographs captured by Br. Mountather al-Karbalaie'. All photographs are taken by him and are subject to copyright. Please explore more of his beautiful photography on his Instagram page, @Monte.Analog. You can contact him directly at Mountazar.Haddad@outlook.com.

We would especially like to thank Al-Kisa Foundation.
May Allah (swt) bless them in this world and the next.

Foreword

Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ):
The best of worship is the study of religion.
- Mīzān al-Ḥikmah, Ḥadīth #2128.

Literature is an influential form of media that often shapes the thoughts and views of an entire generation. Therefore, in order to establish an Islamic foundation for the future generations, there is a dire need for compelling Islamic curriculum and literature. Over the past several years, this need has become increasingly prevalent throughout Islamic centers and schools everywhere. Due to the growing dissonance between parents, children, society, and the teachings of Islam and the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa), this need has become even more pressing. Al-Kisa Foundation, along with its subsidiary, Kisa Publications, was conceived in an effort to help bridge this gap with the guidance of ʿulamāʾ and the help of educators. We would like to make this a communal effort and platform. Therefore, we sincerely welcome constructive feedback and help in any capacity.

The goal of Whispers of Ḥusayn is to illuminate the timeless message of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) through the inspiring medium of poetry. In the words of the Noble Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ), "The example of my Ahlul Bayt is like that of the Ark of Prophet Nūḥ (ʿa). Whoever embarks on it will be saved, and whoever turns away from it will be drowned and lost."[1]

1 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, Biḥār al-Anwār, Vol. 23, P. 114.

In another ḥadīth by the Prophet (ṣ), he specifically mentions Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) by saying, "Indeed, Ḥusayn is the ship of salvation (Safīnatun Najāh), and the fastest and most expansive means of rescue."[2] This profound ḥadīth encapsulates the essence of Imām Ḥusayn's (ʿa) mission and the boundless mercy he extends to those who seek refuge in his legacy.

Poetry, from the time of the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa), has been a powerful tool to convey deep emotions and profound messages. The Ahlul Bayt (ʿa) themselves utilized this art form to reach hearts and minds, connecting people to their innate nature (fiṭrah) and the eternal truths they espoused. Through poetry, the profound messages of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) have been preserved and passed down, resonating with believers across generations.

Poetry serves as a bridge, linking us to the realities and messages of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). The Ahlul Bayt (ʿa) would often recite poetry and commend poets who used their words to highlight the virtues and struggles of the holy household. In this tradition, poetry becomes a vessel, much like the ship of Ḥusayn (ʿa), guiding us towards spiritual awakening and understanding.

The months of Muḥarram and Ṣafar are particularly significant for connecting our hearts to the truth (Ḥaqq). The Noble Qur'ān emphasizes the importance of revering the symbols (shaʿāir) of Allah (swt), stating, "And whoever honors the symbols of Allah—

2 Biḥār al-Anwār, Vol. 44, P. 4, Ḥadīth #1.

indeed, it is from the piety of hearts."[3] Poetry, as an art form, stands as one of the most profound ways to honor these symbols and connect to our innate nature.

In this spirit, we are deeply honored to present Whispers of Ḥusayn, a compilation of heartfelt poetry. We extend our sincerest gratitude to Sister Melanie for her beautiful and evocative verses that capture the essence of Imām Ḥusayn's ('a) message. We also express our profound appreciation to Brother Mountather al-Karbalaie' for the stunning photographs that accompany this collection, adding a visual dimension to the emotional and spiritual journey these poems inspire.

May this compilation serve as a means of connection and reflection, drawing us closer to the timeless message of Imām Ḥusayn ('a) and the ultimate truth he stood for.

We hope that you enjoy this book and use it as a means to achieve this goal, inshā'Allāh.

We pray to Allah (swt) to give us the strength and tawfīq to perform our duties and responsibilities.

With Du'ās,
Nabi R. Mir (Abidi)

3 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah Ḥajj (22), Verse 32.

Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) is calling us

Preface

Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ):
Ḥusayn is from me, and I am from Ḥusayn. Allah (swt) loves those who love Ḥusayn.
Kāmil al-Ziyārāt, Book 2, Chapter 14, Ḥadīth #11

Muḥarram is the first month of the Islamic calendar, and during this month we annually commemorate the martyrdom of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) during the Battle of Karbalāʾ which took place about 1400 years ago. These days of grief are typically filled with programs to reflect over the legacy of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and to mourn the tragedy of Karbalāʾ. The tenth day of the month of Muḥarram is known as ʿĀshūrāʾ, the day when Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) was martyred alongside members of his family and loyal companions. The women and children of his caravan were beaten and taken captive. We remember Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and take him as an example in our own lives to stand up to oppression and embody the truth. Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) is a part of our hearts just as he was part of the Prophet's. Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) was known to have repeated on several occasions, "Ḥusayn is from me, and I am from Ḥusayn. Allah (swt) loves those who love Ḥusayn." May Allah (swt) increase the love of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) in our hearts and allow us to manifest his noble qualities.

How can I embody the words, Ḥusayn is from me, and I am from Ḥusayn? The goal of The Whispers of Ḥusayn is to communicate with and express my love to Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). I use poetry as a means of strengthening my personal relationship with him (ʿa).

When I speak to Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), I whisper these lines of poetry. I know he hears these verses, and I hope he whispers them back to me and adds on a few verses of his own. These are the whispers of Ḥusayn. I pray that our whispers can coalesce in unison, and when Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) calls out, who is left to help me, perhaps these verses will stand up on the battlefield and speak for themselves. Perhaps the poems that follow can carry the sacrifice and legacy of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) forward.

The Whispers of Ḥusayn is meant to be read and reflected upon both aloud and in solitude. May this collection of poems honor Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), and, like him, be a source of light within the darkness, truth in the midst of falsehood, justice in the face of tyranny, and mercy in front of the most inhumane.

With Duʿās,
Melanie Raza

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May our tears never stop flowing for Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa)

Introduction

O' Banī Hāshim
'Āshūrā' is here and
Ḥusayn is calling
It is as if we were there
'Āshūrā' is here and
Ḥusayn is crying

Now that the day of 'Āshūrā' has begun
Ḥusayn becomes Yāsīn
The heart of the Qur'ān

Since the time of Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) and the Imāms (ʿa), poetry was a means to honor and express love for the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa). The Arabian poet, Ḥassān ibn Thābit (d. 674), was a contemporary of Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ), and he wrote many poems in praise and defense of the Prophet in response to those who wished to slander him. He is widely known as the first poet of Islam, and he used to incorporate verses from the Qurʾān into his verses of poetry. Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) praised his efforts and encouraged him to continue reciting poetry.

Poetry is also a means to express our grief and mourn over the tragedies of our Imāms (ʿa), and there is no greater tragedy than the martyrdom of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). In the narration below, Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq (ʿa) encourages a poet to recite verses about his great grandfather with intense emotion and heavy pain in his voice. Both those who recite and listen to poetry which honors the ʾawliyāʾ of Allah (swt) and leads to His remembrance are praised by the Imāms (ʿa) and rewarded by Allah (swt).

Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq (ʿa) said,

'O Abā Hārūn! Recite a poem for me about Ḥusayn (ʿa).' So I recited a poem for him and he cried. Then the Imām (ʿa) said, 'Recite it in the same way that you (usually) recite – with a grief-stricken tone.' Then I recited (the poem which starts with) the following verse: 'Pass by the grave of Ḥusayn and say to his purified bones...' Imām (ʿa) cried and asked me to recite more poems for him. I recited another poem for him. The Imām (ʿa) cried (again) and I also heard (women) crying from behind the curtain. After I finished, the Imām (ʿa) said to me: 'O Abā Hārūn! If one recites a poem about Ḥusayn (ʿa) and cries and makes ten people cry, Paradise will be registered for him and for them. If one recites a poem about Ḥusayn (ʿa) and cries and makes five people cry, Paradise will be registered for him and for them. If one recites a poem about Ḥusayn (ʿa) and cries and makes one person cry, Paradise will be registered for him and for he who cries. Those who shed tears when Ḥusayn (ʿa) is mentioned in front of them will be rewarded by Allah Himself, even if their tears are as small as the wing of a fly. And Allah will not be pleased with any reward for them less than Paradise.'

Kāmil al-Ziyārāt, Bk 2, Ch. 33, Ḥadīth 1

With a heavy heart, tearful eyes, and sorrowful expressions, recite the following poems presented in this collection.

A devotee clings onto the bars at a maqām in Karbalā'

A Letter to Fāṭimah

To the daughter of Muḥammad
To the wife of ʻAlī
To the mother of Ḥasan and Ḥusayn

I have come to you
I have come to meet you
At the fountain of Kawthar
I have come to you
With a message
I do not want to deliver
I have come to you
Under my black shroud
With a message
You will not bear to hear

To the Lady of Paradise
To the Lady of Purity
To the Lady of Perfection

I have come to you
With my heart in my hands
I have come to you
With my head on the floor
I have come to you
With my hands shaking
With a message
You already know

To the Lady of Light
Whose brightness
No one can outmatch
To the Lady of Light
Whose brightness
No one can extinguish
To the Lady of Light
Whose brightness
No one can diminish
To the Lady of Light
Whose brightness
Is illuminated by the grief of Ḥusayn

I have come to grieve with you
If you accept my company
I have come to grieve with you

They ask why I seek your company
Forgetting
The more you yearn for Ḥusayn
The more Ḥusayn brings you closer

The beauty of Karbalā'
Rests in its imagery
The imagery of Karbalā'
That never fades away

O' Sayyidah Fāṭimah az-Zahrā',
Accept my condolences
For my absence
Accept my condolences
For I was not able to be there
On that day your heart was broken
Into more pieces
Than the body of your son, Ḥusayn

On the day your house was broken
On the day the garden of ʿAlī was lit on fire
On the day the inheritance of Khadījah
On the day the purity of Maryam
On the day the steadfastness of Āsiyah
Were all attacked, on that day
Accept my condolences

I bear witness
That I have come today
To pledge allegiance
To beg for your companionship
To be a beggar at his door
To witness the dust before it settles behind
the holy footsteps of Ḥusayn
To sacrifice my family for him
To send my husband to the battlefield
To name my sons ʿAbbās and Ḥusayn
To send them off after their father

O’ Fāṭimah
How can you accept my condolences
When your heart still cracks
With each beat for Ḥusayn
O’ Fāṭimah
How can you accept my condolences
When there are still no words
I can offer
When no words
I could offer
Would be enough
To settle your heart
O’ Fāṭimah
How can you accept my condolences
When there are not enough words
When there is not enough to sacrifice
That would be equivalent to
Your sacrifice of Ḥusayn

Every mother mourns for Sayyidah Fāṭimah's loss

From Mother to Son

Dear Ḥusayn,
When you were a baby
I held you like a mother holds a baby to her chest

Dear Ḥusayn,
When you were a baby
I held you unlike any other mother holds a baby to her chest

Dear Ḥusayn,
I don't know how to start this letter
When you were a baby
I held you in my arms
And I cried and cried and cried
The tears poured down and down and down
Chasing after each other
Until one tear dropped from my cheek to yours
Knowing that there would be a day

When this drop of water
Would stand between you and an army thousands strong

I cried and cried and cried
As if I was the baby
And you were rocking me in your arms
It was your breath on my face
That calmed me
It was your coos
That summoned my strength
To raise you with the care
Like no other mother could give her child

I cried and cried and cried
Knowing that there would be a day
Soon after my death
But not long after
There would be a day of trials
That you have been born for
But that will amount to nothing but tragedy

Dear Ḥusayn,
When you were a baby
I cried instead of smiled
I promise I tried
But every time I smiled at Ḥasan
You would stand there in anticipation
My heart would break faster
Than the smile would be wiped from my face
How could I smile?
When I knew there would come a day
When all happiness will cease
And calamity will reign

Dear Ḥusayn,
When you were a boy
I tried my best to prepare you
I raised you with nothing but affection
I taught you devotion to worship
To show compassion to all creations
To show adoration to the Master of all creations

When you were a boy
I taught you the gentle nature of a leader to his people

The gentleness of a boy to his garden
Of a friend to others

When you were a boy
I taught you to put others before yourself
Because I knew that there would be a day
When you would be the last man
Left alone
Abandoned
Deserted on a blood ridden battlefield
And you will call out for a friend
But you will find nobody but enemies
Surrounding you
Your life in their hands
Who will show you that a lack of empathy to God's creation
Leads to a disease that grows in the heart
Leads to hatred

When you were a boy
I instilled in you
The meaning of sacrifice
In a world filled with nothing but brutality and violence
In exchange for a world filled with nothing but beauty

Dear Ḥusayn,
When you were a man
I pulled Zaynab aside
I told her I wouldn't be there when you needed me the most
Again I cried and cried and cried
But Zaynab had the courage of ʿAbbās
The ferociousness of ʿAlī
The spirit of Ḥusayn
She carried in her heart
Knowing there would be a day
When she would take my shoes
Open your shirt

Kiss your chest then your neck
Whispering my final salutations over you
Her tears would mix with my own
You would feel a cool sweet breeze wash over you
A greeting from paradise
So you would know what destiny awaits you

Millions pledge their allegiance to Imām Ḥusayn ('a)

The Mirror to the Prophet

The grief of Ḥusayn
Begins before the land of pain and calamity

If ʻĀshūrāʾ is to Karbalāʾ
Then Ḥusayn is to Muḥammad

As a child,
When Ḥusayn was out of sight
The Prophet searched anxiously

Under every shelf and carpet
Ḥusayn was nowhere to be found
But when the Prophet looked into the mirror
There was Ḥusayn
There was Ḥusayn staring back at him

And Ḥusayn would reply, how could you lose me?
When I take up your heart
And every tear that drops
Is the chant of my name
Echoed by generations
Relentless in remembrance
Of this very day

Ḥusayn would cry out
O' Prophet, how could you lose me?
When it is you who will find me
When my body is beyond recognition
Recognized solely by the scent of the heavens
Discarded on the desert
But remembered by Allah
Raised to the heavens by the Prophet's own arms

When the Prophet looked into the mirror
The reflection of dedication
Of the Prophet's own supplication
There was Ḥusayn
His sole fixation

His love filled with so much admiration and adoration
If the Prophet treated everyone in moderation
Then there was Ḥusayn, the object of his attention and aspiration

On the day of ʻĀshūrāʾ,
When the Prophet looked into the mirror
He saw Ḥusayn dressed in the Prophet's own turban
Donning the cloak of his grandfather
Wielding the sword of his father
There was Ḥusayn
No longer his reflection
But his exact replication

When the Prophet looked at his hand
It was covered in his grandson's blood
But all he saw was Ḥusayn's heart
Cradled close to the Prophet's chest
When Fāṭimah leaned closer, all she heard was one beat
The one indistinguishable from the other

The unison of two souls
The perfection of religion
Was never as complete
As the Prophet was to Ḥusayn
And as Ḥusayn was to the Prophet

If following the Prophet blindly
Is a slow walk spanning for eternity
Then mourning for Ḥusayn
Is to chase after the Prophet

To mourn for Ḥusayn
Like Fāṭimah mourned for Ḥusayn

When she held her newborn baby in her arms
No smile would come to her lips
Except by the Prophet's comfort
And her tears of grief were met with no match
expect by her father

Remove all sense of vanity, and listen to this story
For all the horror it contains, it trembles on the verge of insanity

The grief of Ḥusayn
Revives the hearts of humanity

When the Prophet held Ḥusayn in his arms
He whispered,
Ḥusayn is from me,
And I am from Ḥusayn

When the Prophet spoke of Ḥusayn
He proudly proclaimed,
Allah loves the one who loves Ḥusayn
When the Prophet played with Ḥusayn
He pulled him onto his back
Come for a ride, the Prophet would tease
As if the pair were embarking on a journey to paradise
The Prophet could only dream
With Ḥusayn's hand in his own

That he could alleviate the pain Ḥusayn would have to face alone

When the Prophet passed
He waited with his hand extended
For Ḥusayn to fulfill his destiny

And it was the Prophet's hand
That encouraged Ḥusayn on the battlefield
It was the Prophet's hand
That Ḥusayn slapped across the face of his enemies
As if to wake them up to their atrocities
It was the Prophet's hand
That would strike Yazīd's army harder and harder
Until Ḥusayn's last breath

When it became too hard to breathe
It was the Prophets hand that lifted Ḥusayn
And when they chopped
And when they stomped
And when they sawed through
The body of Ḥusayn

It was the Prophet's hand that scoured for the pieces of Ḥusayn
It was the Prophet's hand that found Ḥusayn's own
It was the Prophet's hand that took Ḥusayn up to heaven in his arms
To greet his mother and father
To serve in peace their creator

The water bag of ʿAbbās (ʿa) reminds us of his sacrifice

The Sermon of the Flagbearer

Yā Ḥusayn
Yā ʿAbbās

Eloquence breeds eloquence
If ʿAlī is the master of eloquence
Then who is ʿAbbās?
Except the mirror of ʿAlī

Ḥusayn to ʿAbbās
Brother to brother

Who was Ḥusayn to ʿAbbās
Except a brother

Who was ʿAbbās to Ḥusayn
Except a brother

Ḥusayn to ʿAbbās
Brother to brother

The anger of ʿAbbās grew
On the 8th of Dhul Ḥijjah
Upon leaving Mecca towards Kūfah
The anger of ʿAbbās grew
The anger of ʿAbbās grew and grew
Until he found himself on top of the roof of the Kaʿbah

On top of the Kaʿbah
ʿAbbās bellows down to his prey
Like a lion roars to a gazelle who prances in front of him
ʿAbbās roars like a lion

All praise be to Allah
Who made this house
I stand on

All praise be to Allah
Who exalted the status of this house
After the birth of the father of my master Ḥusayn

This house is given honor because of *his* father
All because he is the son of none other than *Fāṭimah*

The respect from one brother to another
In his anger he roars...
O' ill fated transgressors!
If the laws of Allah did not restrict it
If this house was given its own free will
Then I swear to you
I swear to you
Then surely this house would get up and fly
I swear to you
Then surely this house would get up and follow my master
My master, my master

The Kaʿbah would speak
My master, my master
In his anger he roars...
While we yearn to touch al-Ḥajar al-Aswad
Al-Ḥajar al-Aswad yearns to touch Ḥusayn

In his anger he roars...
To follow my Mawlā
Is to follow Allah

In his anger he roars...
If I was not being held back
Then I would sit here
And rip you apart
If I was not being held back
Then I would attack you with a ferocity you haven't seen before
If I was not being held back
I would attack you like an eagle
Rips apart sparrows
After its already had its fill

In his anger he roars...
How dare you
You come and challenge warriors like us!?
How dare you
You come and challenge men like us!?
How dare you

You come and challenge those who play with death
from a young age!?
How dare you
You come and challenge us in the peak of our youth
and bravery!?
You cannot even wait for our old age
Before you take a knife to our backs

In his anger he roars...
O' people of the book
What has become of your intellect!?

In his anger he roars...
On one side
Stand the followers of drunken men

In his anger he roars...
On the other side
Stands the Masters of the fountain of Kawthar

In his anger he roars...

On one side is the house of the people that follow all forms of uncleanliness
On the other side is the house of the peak of purity and the house of revelation
You are now making the same mistake that the Quraysh made!
When they had attempted to kill our Prophet
Now you will take a turn
Now you will attempt to kill the bloodline of our Prophet

The Quraysh were not able to carry out their wicked plan
Because of ʻAlī's bravery
And now you will not be able to touch the grandson of the Prophet
While the son of that same ʻAlī is still there to protect him

In his anger he roars...
Come challenge me
Come take my head

May Allah not make you successful in your plans
May Allah's mercy be withheld from you, your elders, and your progeny

Whose duʿās should Allah accept?
The son of his favorite servant
Or the enemies of his favorite servants

If you thought these were all my words
Then no!
These are the words of none other than the son of ʿAlī

From the Kaʿbah to Karbalāʾ
The anger of ʿAbbās grew

The anger of ʿAbbās grew
As they cornered Ḥusayn's army

In Khaybar
The Prophet gave the ʿalam to Imām ʿAlī

In Karbalā’
Ḥusayn gave the ʿalam to ʿAbbās

The anger of ʿAbbās grew
As he heard the cries of the children
Al-ʿaṭash, al-ʿaṭash

The anger of ʿAbbās grew
As he marches onto the battlefield
Like ʿAlī in Badr
Like ʿAlī in Uḥud
Like ʿAlī in Khaybar
Like ʿAlī in Jamal
Like ʿAlī in Ṣiffīn
Like ʿAlī in Nahrawān

The anger of ʿAbbās grew
Like ʿAlī in Karbalā’

The anger of ʿAbbās grew
As he approaches the enemies on his way to the river
They run over their feet

They run backwards in fear
ʻAlī is approaching!
ʻAlī is approaching!
The anger of ʻAbbās grew
In the middle of the battlefield
The enemies scatter like mice in a barren field
In the middle of the battlefield
ʻAbbās proclaims
I am Abul Faḍl
I am the Father of Excellence

The anger of ʻAbbās grew
On his way towards Furāt
ʻAbbās proclaims
I am Qamar Banī Hāshim

The anger of ʻAbbās grew
The light of ʻAbbās grew
As if he himself had taken the moon from the sky

The anger of ʻAbbās grew
As they fire arrow after arrow

The anger of ʻAbbās grew and grew
Until the moon itself shakes and trembles
Until the moon itself falls from the sky
As one hand follows another
He roars
I am shahīd
You have killed ʻAlī
You have killed the son of ʻAlī
Who will protect my brother now?

Our love for Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) is brighter than any candle

The Calm Before the Storm

With the first moments of Muḥarram
The reckoning and judgment have come

My heart sets with the sun
My legs tremble and shake
As gentle as grass sways in the wind

The light breeze
At first a warning
Gives way to a blaring alarm

As thunder strikes
My legs give way
Until I collapse upon my back
Do I feel the sharp prickles
As the blades of grass are raised
The earth remembers the pain
And it cannot hold onto to it
Alone
Any longer

The blades of grass
Are uprooted from their home
Dirt and mudded smeared on their faces
As the children were uprooted from their homes
Dirt and mudded smeared on their faces

The grass and the dirt and the mud
And the children
Are raised all together
In memory of what is yet to come

This destiny the grass has shaped
They sharpen their blades
Ready at a moment's cause
To serve their Master
Call me, and I will come
I have been created to serve
The truth

One by one
The blades of grass
Each sharper than the next

Come marching
Along with the children
Each sharper than the next
Come marching
Onto the foreboding plains
Of Karbalāʾ
Pick me
Pick me
Each blade of grass cries out
Each child cries out
So desperate to please
The one who stands for the truth
With their back
As straight as an edge
They wage war
All trepidation aside
They are alight with inner tranquility
Knowing their mission
Is to preserve the truth
Spinning their blades in figure 8's
Calling out their support and praise
O' Ḥusayn, it is you we trust

O' Ḥusayn, it is you we fight for
O' Ḥusayn, it is you we remember
O' Ḥusayn, is is you who remembers us

As the blades of grass
Are torn to pieces
Trodden and trampled
As the children
Are torn to pieces
Trodden and trampled
They call out
They call out
O' Ḥusayn!
Do you hear me?

They call out
They call out
O' Ḥusayn
Do you see me?
They call out
They call out
O' Ḥusayn!

Will you remember me
As often as I will remember you?

They call out
The first expression they were taught
By their mothers
And their mothers before them

They call out
Labbayka, Yā Ḥusayn
Knowing with the certainty
Of the lovers of Imām Ḥusayn
That he will hear them
Even beneath his feet
On the ground he walks on
And all those buried underneath
They call out
Labbayka, Yā Ḥusayn

And he responds
By the mercy of Allah
I am with you

Whenever you call upon me
I will fight with those
Who fought with me

I will cry with those
Who cried with me

I will show love to those
Who showed love to me

I will call on those
Who called out to me

Labbayka, Yā Ḥusayn

Every year his lovers serve water to the visitors in his name

The Thirst of Water

Did you hear the story
Of the Anbiyā'?
We made every living thing out of water
(Qur'ān, Sūrah al-Anbiyā', 21:30)

Did you hear the story
Of how water protected its Anbiyā'?

Water raised the station of Prophet Nūḥ
The waves took down the faithless
The waves took down the faithless
(Qur'ān, Sūrah Hūd, 11:43)

'O earth, swallow your water!
'O sky, leave off!
The waters receded
The edict was carried out
And the ark of Nūḥ settled
On Mount Jūdiyy

The water called out
Away with the wrongdoing lot!
(Qur'ān, Sūrah Hūd, 11:44)

Water raised the station of Prophet Nūḥ
And Prophet Nūḥ raised the station of water

The water called out
Away with the wrongdoing lot!
The water called out
In Prophet Nūḥ's defense
Away with the wrongdoing lot!

Come down from the ship, O' Nūḥ
Come down from the ship, O' Nūḥ
The water has done its duty
The earth is saved
The water has retreated
The earth is saved
The water has cleansed the earth of tyranny and injustice
The earth is saved for Prophet Nūḥ

The water has cleansed the earth of tyranny and injustice
But where was the water when Ḥusayn was fighting against this same tyranny and injustice?

Did you hear the story
Of the Furqān?
It is He who created the human being from water
(Qur'ān, Sūrah al-Furqān, 25:54)

If the Qur'ān itself is the decisive factor between good and evil
Then
Tell me,

Who has sovereignty over water?
Should your water sink down [into the ground],
Who will bring you running water?
(Qur'ān, Sūrah al-Mulk, 67:30)

Who will bring you running water?
Except by the power granted by Allah

Did you hear the story
Of how water protected its Anbiyā'?

And when Mūsā prayed for water for his people,
Prophet *Mūsā* prayed for water for his people
We said, 'Strike the rock with your staff.'
Mūsā struck the rock with his staff
Until twelve fountains gushed forth from it;
12 flowing fountains appeared in front of him
Drink of Allah's provision,
Drink! Quench your thirst!
But *Do not cause corruption*
(Qur'ān, Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:60)

Who will bring you running water?
Except by the power granted by Allah

If the Qur'ān itself is the decisive factor between
good and evil

Then
Tell me,
What is water?
If not the factor between the battle of good and evil

And when Mūsā's people were being pursued by Firʿawn
His companions said to Mūsā, *Indeed we have been caught*
Mūsā responds,
Certainly not!
Indeed my Lord is with me.
He will guide me.
Allah revealed to Mūsā
Strike the sea with your staff!
The sea parted for Mūsā
Each part was as if it were a great mountain
We delivered Mūsā to victory
And drowned the others
(Qurʾān, Sūrah ash-Shuʿarāʾ, 26:61-66)

Come out from the sea, O' Mūsā
Come out from the sea, O' Mūsā
The water has done its duty
The earth is saved
The water has retreated
The earth is saved

The water has cleansed the earth of tyranny and injustice
The earth is saved for Prophet Mūsā
The water has cleansed the earth of tyranny and injustice
But where was the water when Ḥusayn was fighting against this same tyranny and injustice?

Did you hear the story
Of how water protected its Anbiyāʾ?

For 40 nights
And for 40 days
Prophet Yūnus sat
In the belly of the whale
He thought that We would not test him with hardship
He cried in the darkness
'There is no god except You!
You are immaculate!
I have indeed been among the wrongdoers!'
So We answered his prayer
So We delivered him from the agony;

As We deliver the faithful
(Qur'ān, Sūrah al-Anbiyā', 21:87-88)

Had he not celebrated Allah's glory
Then surely
He would have remained in the whale's belly
Till the day they will be resurrected
(Qur'ān, Sūrah aṣ-Ṣāffāt, 37:143-144)

Come out from the whale, O' Yūnus
Come out from the whale, O' Yūnus
The water has done its duty
The earth is saved
The water has retreated
The earth is saved
The water has cleansed your heart of impatience
The water has filled your heart with understanding
for your people
The earth is saved for Prophet Yūnus

Did you hear the story
Of how water protected its Anbiyā'?

Alone in the scorching desert
Hājar needed water
Back and forth she walked
7 times
7 times between Ṣafā and Marwah
Back and forth she walked
To save Ismāʿīl
Jibrāʾīl comes
To save Ismāʿīl
With Zam Zam
Fill fill
She fills her flask with water
Who else could be the inheritor of Zam Zam?
Except Ḥusayn

Did you hear the story
Of how water protected its Anbiyāʾ?

But where was water when it needed to protect our Mawlā?

If water gave spirit to its Anbiyā'
Then what battle did Ḥusayn fight without water
Ḥusayn's only witness
Is water

It was water
Who witnessed
The final moments of Muslim ibn 'Aqīl
In his last moments
They shoved a cup of water under his nose
As if to mock his Master
He could not drink
They shoved a cup of water under his nose
So Muslim watched as his blood dripped into the water
As if the water itself was crying
As if the water itself was crying out to quench the thirst of its Master

It was water
Who witnessed
When Ḥusayn quenched the thirst of the enemies' horses

When Ḥusayn quenched the thirst of Ḥurr
It was the water
Who witnessed
When there was no water left
To quench the thirst of Ḥusayn and his horses

It was the water
Who witnessed
And it was the water
Who knew
It was the water
Who knew in a few days
It would not be able to satiate the thirst of its Master

It was the water
Who witnessed
The cries of ʿAbbās
As he came galloping towards it
So close to the river
But so far from the water
It was the water who cried out for ʿAbbās
Before Ḥusayn could cry out for ʿAbbās

It was the water
Who witnessed
The thirst of ʿAlī al-Akbar
As he cried to his father
Al-ʿaṭash! Al-ʿaṭash!
The thirst is too strong, O' father!

It was the water
Who witnessed
It was the water who cried
It was the water who begged to help
It was the water who begged
To send a flood to destroy the disbelievers
It was the water who begged
To send a ship to save Ḥusayn and his family
It was the water who begged
To send 12 fountains to quench their thirst
It was the water who begged
To drown the enemies in a wave larger than any sea
It was the water who begged
To send a whale to protect Ḥusayn for 40 days more
It was the water who begged

To send Jibrā'īl with a stream more pure than Zam Zam

It was the water
Who witnessed
The kicks of ʿAlī al-Aṣghar
As he laid alone on the sand
It was the water who cried
It was the water who begged to help ʿAlī al-Aṣghar
just as it had helped Ismāʿīl

In Ḥusayn's last moments
It was the water who cried
It was the water who begged to help

In Ḥusayn's last moment
The water wished it could come save Ḥusayn

In Ḥusayn's last moment
There was only one whose thirst was greater
It was the water who cried louder than anyone else
for its Master

It was the thirst of water
That gave Ḥusayn his final moments of strength

On the path to Kūfah
On the path to Shām
As those who would mock Zaynab and the children
Would pour water into the sand
The water felt ashamed
It begged, *Who will bring you running water?*
(Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Mulk, 67:30)
The water felt ashamed
It begged, *Who will bring you running water?*
(Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Mulk, 67:30)
The water begged to be offered to Zaynab and the children

The water's duʿās would be answered
When Ḥusayn is finally reunited with the flowing water under the shade of Kawthar

Ḥusayn drinks
The flowing water in the streams of Tasnīm

Ḥusayn drinks
Ḥusayn forsakes water in this world
Until he is reunited with the flowing water in
Jannah

After the water has stood witness to all the atrocities
After the water has begged and begged to play its
part
Only now does the water understand
Verily Ḥusayn is the lantern of guidance
Verily Ḥusayn is the ark of salvation

On that day
Ḥusayn becomes the staff of Mūsā
Splitting the enemies forces like the Red Sea
On that day
The legacy of Ḥusayn becomes the well of
Zam Zam
Never-ending ever-flowing
Gracious to every visitor who knocks on his door

Only now does the water understand
That no flood is as large
That no ship is as strong
That no fountain is as pure
That no wave is as powerful
That no stream is as satiating
As the message Ḥusayn carries
As the message we carry for Ḥusayn

May our hands never let go of the rope of Allah (swt)

The Back of Ḥusayn

I've finally arrived
My face pressed against the shrine
I whisper to him under my breath,
Accept me
I know you can hear me accept my prayers
Intercede on my behalf

My hands wrap around criss-crossed gold ornate bars
The bars become his hands
My hands clasps around his fist

My knuckles white against the surge of black sleeves
Arms
Followed by heads
Followed by bodies
Pushing their way forward

This is insanity
Yet this is serenity

I want to melt into the shrine
I know he hears me
He returns my greetings and salutations
If only I could hear them
If only I could hear him

My body shakes
My body sobs

Holding nothing
Empty handed
My hands grip in fury and grief
I am here
I hear his brother scream on the battlefield,
Is there anyone left to help me?
I am here

My hands grasp the bars tighter
As if I am a prisoner in a jail cell

Trying to force my way free into the world of
paradise

I am there with him every day as I recite his ziyārah
As if this tissue I cry into will be enough
To soak up the holy blood that was spilled

What would they do with his hands, my hands?

Bodies pressed against every inch of the shrine
An insignificant slave in front of the ultimate martyr

I want nothing more than your acceptance
I am a weak slave

I am just another slave who does not worship
God enough

I am content he is in the same place as me
This is enough for me
I catch his holy fragrance with the breeze
I look up at the chandeliers on the ceiling

I promise to protect you
I am here to protect you

I wipe his shrine
My body is a mop
My tears are the water
I take the shawl from around my neck
I wipe clean the blood
From his wrists
His neck
His eyes
Don't let me forget you
Don't let me be a stranger in your paradise

I scream
Because my screams are inflicting further
punishment on his enemies
I preserve the enmity of his enemies
His enemies are my enemies

His friends are my friends

I feel his pain as my own pain

I slam my arms against my chest

I can no longer feel my body around me

I am running back

I am screaming, *may my future children be sacrificed for yo*u
If I had a thousand sons,
I'd name them all 'Abbās
Let me return next year and the next

The relief I feel when the tears continue to pour down my cheeks
I feel the blissful renewal of my faith
I am unworthy,

But I am still blessed with this love
The moment his dome goes out of sight
I run back again

All I want is to wash away my sins
With the flowing of my blood
The death of shahādah

I dream
That when I awaken
That the two gates of paradise
Opened by the arms of ʻAbbās
Beckon me to come closer

I'm there with him on the tenth of Muḥarram
Yā Ḥusayn, the tragedy has only just begun
His brother ʻAbbās,
His standard bearer

Our hero, he is ʻAbbās,
The moon on a dark night

It's been 1400 years
Since the camp of Ḥusayn's army went without water
Today I am finally here
But only too late

ʻAbbās runs out to the river to gather water
He bends down and cups his hands

He sees the children staring back at him in the water
He splashes the water back down in horror
He can not drink before the children
He does not drink before he is
Shot down with arrows sticking out of his body
ʻAbbās is gone

Gone
Gone

He loses one arm to another arrow
With the click of his feet
ʻAbbās pulls his horse fast
But the speed of the enemies' arrows is faster
He is ʻAbbās,
The lion that other lions fear
Whom the enemy ran from in Ṣiffīn
The lion that other lions fear
Whom the enemy run from in Karbalāʾ
The lion that other lions fear
Until he is outnumbered

Take my tears
I rub my face against the bars

Take my arm
I rub my arm against the bars

His other arm is cut off
His stomach is torn open with arrows
He has nothing to hold the water with
So he holds the water pouch with his mouth
The water that flowed from the bag
Taken adrift by the river
Remember the line ʿAbbās drew in the sand
With two hands over his sword
"I dare you to cross the boundary
You will be accountable to *me*"

The river will wash away
The words in the sand
The river will wash away
The protector of the women

The river will wash away
The protector of the children

The protector
Is gone

The hope of the children wash away

His eye is hit
The water is punctured

A stream of blood trails behind him
A stream of water trails behind him

Two streams convalescing in their grief for the tragedy of ʻAbbās

The water is gone
How long does ʻAbbās have
Before all hope is gone

He rides back to the camp with no water no limbs
Hit with a mace in the back of the head
He has no arms to catch his fall
Falls face first off his horse

Nothing catches him but the arrow in his eye

The standard still stands before he falls
His brother ʻAbbās,
His standard bearer gone

The back of Ḥusayn has been broken
Without ʻAbbās's hands
To wave to the children
To wave the banner
To wave his sword
Down on the throats of the enemies
Ḥusayn has nothing left

Ḥusayn calls out
Is there anyone left?

Call out proudly
Yā Ḥusayn

Is there anyone left to help me,
Nobody answers

Is there anyone left to help me,
There was nobody left
I stand up and scream,
Take me instead

Soon the tents will burn in flames
The children will scatter in fear
The screams of the women will ring louder
To drown out their fear that will never be replaced
Except by their grief
They look up at the sky
Searching for the moon
Where are you, O' 'Abbās?
Where are you, O' 'Abbās?
But 'Abbās lies still on the riverbank
The tears still flowing down his holy face

Without the hands of ʿAbbās
To hold his brother upright
The back of Ḥusayn
Has broken

The back of Ḥusayn
Has broken

The tragedy of ʿAlī al-Akbar brings a river of tears

The Heart of Ḥusayn

On the morning of the tenth
The voice of ʻAlī al-Akbar rings out the words of Allah
His last adhān on this earth
The mountains sway to his soothing voice
The wind carries the melody
Up to the birds
Who chant the name of Ḥusayn
Already mourning for the day to come
For the sacrifice of ʻAlī al-Akbar
His voice rings out against an army of 30,000
A foreshadow of his sword to come

Allāhu Akbar
The beauty of his voice
Bring forth the first tears shed

ʻAlī al-Akbar begs his father's permission
In Ḥusayn's face is remission

His mother
His sisters
His aunts
All tug at his coats
Trying to keep him close
Nobody wants to bid a final farewell
How can we let him go?

This is the son
Who Ḥusayn would carry around
Like a Qurʾān he carried in his pocket
Closer to his heart
Than his own veins
How can we let him go?

The very heart of Ḥusayn
The one beats for the other
Their souls intertwined
In complete understanding
Of what will be sacrificed
How can we let him go?

When Ibrāhīm prepared to give up his beloved
Ismāʿīl
Allah returned him safely to his father's arm
But when Ḥusayn prepared to give up his beloved
ʿAlī
Allah returned his body in pieces

Ḥusayn looks into the face of his beloved son
Whose teenage face resembles the holy Prophet of
God

Whenever I miss my grandfather
I look at the face of ʿAlī al-Akbar

The akhlāq
The fragrance
The charisma
The Prophet in the flesh
Whose flesh will soon be scattered across the plains
How can we let him go?

The strength of Ḥusayn rests on
The strength of the mothers of Karbalā'
The pain of every mother as they send their boys
to die
The mother of 'Alī al-Akbar, Yā Laylā
Do you hear our pleas?

With your oppression,
The world still shakes and cries

Yā Laylā,
Only another mother can understand
The blessings of a son to his parents
The strength and responsibility of this young man,
Can only make your heart swell with pride
The coolness of your eyes
The contentment of your heart

Yā Laylā,
Only another mother can understand
Your pain

You taught ʿAlī al-Akbar how to walk and talk
You taught ʿAlī al-Akbar how to recite the verses of God
That would flow so free from his lips
You taught ʿAlī al-Akbar what it means to be a man
You saw ʿAlī become a man
Now, how will you see him when he is cut into more parts of himself?

When ʿAlī enters the battlefield
He calls out one line
That will send the enemies
Quaking with fear

Anā ʿAlī
Ibn Ḥusayn
Ibn ʿAlī

Generations of ʿAlī
Strike down the forces of Shām

That same courage

That same ferocity
That same bravery
Makes the legs of the enemies tremble
By the time they ask themselves,
What have we done?
Their heads will already be flung
By the sword of ʿAlī
Across the battlefield

He rides back to his father
Begging him for just a drop of water
What more does Ḥusayn have to give him,
Than his own tongue?
Dryer than his own
ʿAlī gasps in horror

O' father,
In your name
I will fight
I will die

He strikes down 120 enemies

Until he is struck

How many times will they strike the Prophet?
Still they throw a spear through his lineage
Deep in his chest
They leave the spear inside
Tangled in veins
The spear inseparable from his chest
ʻAlī loses his balance
He can no longer recognize his enemies from
the floor

How will he fight for his father?

When they strike an iron rod through his holy head
Struck like the cruelty of a 100 arrows

Ḥusayn hears ʻAlī's cries
Reminding him of his father's last moments
Ḥusayn is blinded by his tears

He cannot see the sand from his feet

Blinded
The world spins under him
He doesn't remember how he reaches his horse
Sakīnah cries out
Father, you are going the wrong way!
All Ḥusayn hears are his own cries
Ḥusayn's own sacrifice
The vitality in his eyes
Without him
How can he see
Except with his heart
That remains scattered on the plains

He holds his son's head close
Closer in his lap
As if he is trying to give ʿAlī his heart
So he can live to beat another day

The tears of Ḥusayn cover the Prophet's face
Finally giving ʿAlī the water he asked for

As the spirit of the Prophet slowly fades away

Ḥusayn tries to take the spear out
To alleviate his pain
Instead his heart spills out
Blood gushing
The heart of the Prophet
The heart of Ḥusayn
The heart of ʿAlī
Ḥusayn cradles his son's heart in his hands
His body cut up into pieces
What is left?
His legs trail behind
Apart from his body
Broken parts
The back of Ḥusayn has broken for ʿAbbās
Now his eyes and heart are no more

Ḥusayn calls out to the children,
Pick up the pieces of your brother

Yā Laylā,
How do you stand?
Under the weight of your son's janāzah

Yā Ḥusayn,
How do you fight to your death?
Without any sons left
To carry your janāzah

Yā Ḥusayn,
You lost your ʿAbbās
You lost your Qāsim
You lost your Akbar

Slowly the petals of Ḥusayn fall off
Carried away by the breeze of paradise
Until all that stands tall
Is the stem of Ḥusayn
Waiting to be the last
To be torn out of the sand
Waiting to be the last
To be stomped on
Waiting to be the last
Stand for our men, women, and youth
Our final salvation
For humanity
Our Ḥusayn

Even the youngest were not spared on the day of 'Āshūrā'

From Cradle to Grave

Before ʿAlī al-Aṣghar was struck
He lay protected, tucked
Against his father's heart
His end before his start

His father's chest a shield
For a sip of water he appealed
But the enemies would not yield
His throat struck on the battlefield

Born a month before Ḥusayn's caravans left
Born in a world of oppression
Only to die in a world of oppression

Ḥusayn calls out
Where is my son

Ḥusayn calls out
For one last embrace

Ḥusayn calls out
But already ʿAlī al-Aṣghar's cries have been silenced

Ḥusayn calls out
Is there anyone left to help me?
His last hope has left him alone

As he walks onto the battlefield,
Flanked by the souls of his children
Ḥusayn calls out
To the heavens
For you, Yā Allah

The enemies of Ḥusayn are blinded
Misguided
They forget He is the one who provided
With Yazīd they sided
Their destiny decided
Their pride has left them grinded
Into the dirt of their graves
Of their deeds they will be reminded
By then, the fire will be ignited

Their souls will scream,
Why did... ?
Why did I... ?
Unable to make a wrong righted
To their ego, they are binded

Ḥusayn makes one last plea to his enemies
What better offering of peace
Than a 6 month old baby
Yā Aṣghar, stick out your tongue
Show them how thirsty you are
They will have mercy
For you Yā Aṣghar, even they must have mercy
Ḥusayn rocks his son in his arms
His father's affection is all ʻAlī al-Aṣghar needs

His father's affection is all ʻAlī al-Aṣghar needs
To smile
The peeps of his tongue across his lips
The smile that broke the hearts of Yazīd's soldiers
Causes an inkling of doubt in their hearts
Ḥurmalah starts to fear

He must do what needs to be done

Tonight, as his soul departs
Our hearts are ripped apart
The heart of Ḥurmalah so shallow
A three pronged arrow
Pierces the believers of Allah
The smallest hero of Karbalā'

In Ḥusayn's right hand,
His son's head rests
In Ḥusayn's left hand,
His son's body rests

His grave the size of Ḥusayn's heart
From cradle to grave
His cradle, our heart

In his cradle, his mother rocks him
Rubāb cannot let him go

Her cries soak up the blood on the battlefield

His last ghusl with his mother's tears
His shroud is painted red
From the tears splattered
Every cry missed from her baby
Is a stab pressed into her heart
To the cradle she clings

Every baby's cry is a cry for ʻAlī al-Aṣghar

Rock the cradle
But do not look inside
Your heart will not survive
Your eyes will not forgive you for what you find
Do not ask why the baby does not eat or cry
Rock the cradle smoothly
Until the baby falls into slumber
For its service to humanity
Let the baby rest
For eternity

Rock the cradle
But do not look inside
Or your soul will pass you by
Rock the cradle gently
But do not look inside

Ḥusayn cradles the body tight
His fingers refuse to loosen
Until a caress over his shoulders
ʻAlī and Fāṭimah come to soothe their son
In the Prophet's hands,
His tiny body glows bright

Ḥusayn takes his sword
There is no other man left to dig a grave
Without his back
Without his eyes
As he kisses his son goodbye
In his hands is the last light of his heart

The night of ʻĀshūrā'
Sakīnah finally gets her sip of water
She runs to tell ʻAbbās

Before she remembers
She runs to tell ʻAlī al-Aṣghar
Ready to tell him the slightest bit of good news
amongst all the tragedy
She runs towards his cradle
She tries to rock him awake
But she cannot find him under a single tree or rock
Where has ʻAlī al-Aṣghar gone?
She asks Zaynab,
Where has ʻAlī al-Aṣghar gone?
Where is my baby?
Where is the light of Ḥusayn?

He is gone from his cradle
Directly into his grave

The day of calamity has begun

Maqtal al-Ḥusayn

One by one
The guardians of heaven chopped down
By the sword of Yazīd
Dragged through the sand
Until blood flowed through their wounds
Smoother than the river Euphrates
As the day goes on
The armies of Shām sharpen their swords
Their mercilessness increasing as they turn their swords towards the Banī Hāshim

ʻAlī al-Akbar is the first one gone
As he rode into the battlefield
Ḥusayn was following him
How can I not
When you are my beloved son
How can I let you go
Ḥusayn's heart rising and falling
As he watches his son fight

Each cut on his body
Is a stab in Ḥusayns heart
Until the final spear goes through
He watches the light in his son's eye
He is reminded by his father ʻAlī

Qāsim is the next one gone
The representation of Ḥasan
Each look into his eyes
A reminder of the Ahlul Kisā'
Of simpler times
Playing on the Prophet's back
Now the Prophet's back is broken

His last pleas are heard by all
O' my Uncle, please help me!
As he is dragged through the horses grooves
Ḥusayn scrambles for his horse
As he watches his brother being beat in front of him
Ḥusayn stumbles towards Qāsim's lifeless body
Before he collapses on top of his chest
He lets out a bellow, *Wā Ḥasan, Wā ʻAlī*

What have they done to my sons?

ʿAbbās
Ḥusayn does not let him go
O' ʿAbbās, you are the commander of my armies
He turns towards Ḥusayn
What army
There is nobody left but me
ʿAbbās is Ḥusayn's strength
His vision
His support
Ḥusayn still feels some hope
As he watches ʿAbbās ride back with the water

As if Imāmʿ Alī himself is approaching
He hears the excitement of the children as they cheer

Until that man comes and severs his right arm
The flag of ʿAbbās dips down for a moment
He switches the flag to his other hand
Repeating nothing but the Kalimah

ʻAbbās is riding until that arrow strikes him in the eye
Forcing him to lean back in his horse
Deeper
As the flag leans lower
And lower
Carrying the water in his mouth
Until he is hit with that metal pole
It is as if the moon comes crashing down onto the earth
The foundation of guidance
The foundation of bravery
The foundation of strength
Have all come crashing down

O' people of the book,
When a young child falls down
He has his hands to catch him
When ʻAbbās falls down
What does he have left
What is there to catch his fall
He has an arrow in his eye

Which goes deeper and deeper
Salāmun ʻalaykum Yā Abā ʻAbdillāh
Ḥusayn collapses on the ground
Stumbling on the battlefield
His eyes gone from Akbar
His back is no longer there
He crawls over to ʻAbbās
Putting his head in his lap
ʻAbbās pushes him away

O' Ḥusayn
When every martyr dies
He has you to hold him
You to relive his pain

What will you have
What will you have except the knees of Shimr
crushing you down
What comfort will you have
When that blunt dagger is all that you will see
His back broken
His eyes gone

He returns to the camps alone
How can he tell them ʻAbbās is dead
He goes to his tent
Pulls out the pole
The tent collapses
The tents erupt in cries
Wā Muḥammadā
Wā ʻAlīyā
Wā ʻAbbās

With nothing left
Ḥusayn hopes for less mercy
Than the size of that small infant

Ḥusayn hopes for mercy
For the baby that knows nothing but oppression

O' people of the book,
Know that the worst of oppression
Happens to the youngest of the Banī Hāshim
First it is Muḥsin, now it is Aṣghar

Ḥusayn whispers in his baby's ear, you will join me
in paradise
Aṣghar smiles at his fathers words

When Ḥusayn raises Aṣghar higher than the heavens
Aṣghar licks his lips
The army of Yazīd erupts
Until that man comes forth
It is said that when Ḥurmalah was aiming

In his own words,
I saw the shine in his neck
That is the spot for which I aimed

The arrow cuts through from one side to the other
Embedded in the head of Ḥusayn
Ḥusayn's heart stops in his throat

With no more words for the army of Shām
He approaches the tent of Rubāb
But then turns away again
Until all he can show Rubāb
Is his blood soaked beard

Whenever Ḥusayn would get on top of his horse
It was always ʿAbbās who would lift him up
He looks to the riverbank
Waiting for ʿAbbās to come
Instead Zaynab becomes his ʿAbbās

As Ḥusayn is about to depart,
Zaynab calls him back
She opens his shirt
To kiss his neck
To kiss his chest
This is the final will of our mother Fāṭimah
O' my brother Ḥusayn, bid her farewell
O' my brother Ḥusayn, without you this world is empty
Ḥusayn tries to go forth
But his horse won't move

He looks down
To see the arms of that four year old girl
Wrapped around the legs of the horse

Begging the horse
Please don't take my Baba away

If there was one moment in Karbalāʾ
Ḥusayn's heart broke the most
It was when he saw Sakīnah
Begging him not to go

Ḥusayn puts Sakīnah to sleep on his chest one last time
Knowing the next time she finds him
His chest will be in pieces
Knowing that all that is written for her
Is slaps and whips

Ḥusayn rides into the battlefield
With his sword drawn
Dhulfiqār shining brighter than the day it came down
The power of ʿAlī surges from his hands
The strength of Jaʿfar with every blow
The bravery of Ḥamzah in front of every enemy

The cloak of the Prophet around his shoulder
Upon hearing Ḥusayn's entrance into the battlefield
Hal min nāṣirin yanṣurunā
Sajjād awakens from his fever
He asks his aunt Zaynab
For a sword and a stick

Why a stick, my son?
A stick to walk on
A sword to defend my father with
Until my last breath

Zaynab recites Ḥusayn's final will to him
O' my Sajjād, you are the Imām after me
You will have to see those tragedies that even I could not bear
O' Sajjād, you will have to see your Aunts and sisters
Taken in chains
The inheritance of Fāṭimah whipped and paraded
In the streets of Kūfah and Shām

Ḥusayn rides into the battlefield
Braver than a roaring lion
Cutting down the soldiers of Shām like blades of grass
The earth is quaking from the fear of Yazīd's army

Ḥusayn splits their army
Like Mūsā split the sea
The whole time reciting
Anā Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad
Anā Ḥusayn ibn ʻAlī
Anā Ḥusayn ibn Fāṭimah

The wounds on Ḥusayn's body multiple
As the rocks start pounding
As the arrows start hailing
With every wound Ḥusayn weakens
His road to paradise quickens
Ḥusayn swings his sword up one last time
And hears the voice from the heavens

O' soul at peace!
Return to your lord pleased and pleasing
So enter into my abode
And enter into my paradise
(Qur'ān, Sūrah al-Fajr, 89:27-30)

Ḥusayn lowers his head
As he falls to the ground
The earth begins to tremble
The skies begin to darken
The wind suddenly stills
A quietness pervades across the plains
A silence so eerie

Ḥusayn's forehead is prostrating in the sand
What is he saying to his lord
He repeats
My lord
Everything you asked me I did
Everything I promised you I did
Now it is your turn Yā Allah
Allow me to intercede for my followers

No man dared to approach Ḥusayn
Until that accursed man
Called out, loot the tents of Zaynab!
Leave Ḥusayn to me

Ḥusayn immediately thrashed
Letting out the cry
Ḥusayn is still alive

Shimr approaches him
No mercy in his eyes

Ḥusayn reminds him
Whose Kalimah he recites

Ḥusayn reminds him
Whose grandfather the Qur'ān was revealed to

Even in his final moments,
Ḥusayn gave him a chance
And what did Shimr give in return?
He kicks and kicks the body of Ḥusayn

Ḥusayn's bones can take no more
Until Shimr pulls out that blunt dagger
The angels try to hold him back
The pits of hell are opening for him

As he sits on the chest of Abā ʿAbdillāh
And slices his dagger
All I can think of is
Our Ḥusayn
Died thirsty

The shrine of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) glistens under the rising sun

Daybreak

The day breaks in half with the tragedy of Ḥusayn

وَالفَجْرِ
Wal-fajr
By the Dawn,

The adhān is heard
ʻAlī al-Akbar calls upon Allah
As the witness of the Ahlul Bayt
Allah is great!
Allah is great!
Allah is with us
Allah is on our side
As the sun rises
It watches
The heat on the back of the enemies
Scorches hotter than the hellfire

By the dawn,
This is the day
The plains of Karbalā' will go up in flames
Burning the feet who dare to trespass on the family of Ḥusayn

وَلَيالٍ عَشْرٍ
Wa layālin ʿashr
By the ten nights,

Each one a marker of a greater tragedy
Another eulogy to read
Shattering all sense of reality
But the morality of Ḥusayn's family
Cannot be broken
Even in the face of mortality
In the face of calamity
Ḥusayn rises
In the face of brutality
Ḥusayn rises
In the face of profanity
Ḥusayn rises

The insanity of the enemies
Is proven by Ḥusayn's majesty

وَالشَّفْعِ وَالوَتْرِ
Wash-shaf'i wal-watr
By the Even and the Odd,

Ḥusayn is the last man left on the battlefield
Surrounded by enemies
With their knives sharpened
Stones at the ready
Rods heavy
Teeth bared like savagery

Ḥusayn, alone on this earth
The odds are against him
He faces his enemies bravely
Knowing with every second
Closer to his last

The odd one out
Out of every equation
Is God
The Prophet speaks
Ḥusayn echos
The one who loves me,
Loves my family!
The one who loves me,
Loves Ḥusayn!

The enemies don't know
That Ḥusayn plus Allah
Brings victory to the playing ground

وَاللَّيلِ إِذا يَسْرِ
Wal-layli idhā yasr
By the night when it departs!

If the day breaks in half with the tragedy of Ḥusayn
Then what happens to the night?
How many pieces does it break into?

The pieces of Ḥabīb ibn Muẓāhir
The pieces of Muslim ibn ʻAqīl
The pieces of Qāsim
The piece of ʻAbbās
The pieces of ʻAlī al-Akbar
The pieces of ʻAlī al-Aṣghar
The pieces of Ḥusayn
The pieces of Sakīnah
The angels don't know who to weep over before the other
The head of Ḥusayn on a spear
Speaking of the signs of Allah
How can we understand the night of Ḥusayn?
The women dragged through the streets in chains
Speaking of the signs of Allah
How can we understand the day after Ḥusayn?

هَل فِي ذٰلِكَ قَسَمٌ لِّذي حِجرٍ
Hal fī dhālika qasamul-lidhī ḥijr
Is there an oath in that for one possessing intellect?

The weight of these 10 days
Overburdens the minds that lack intellect
The minds that wander over the tragedy of our Master
Without pausing to feel the pain of today
Their hearts have gone astray
Unswayed by the truth they betrayed

The weight of these 10 days
Falls flat on the faces
Who turn their cheek the other way
It is God, they disobey
You can replay and replay the horror of these days
But still they underplay the tragedy
Swear by the dawn of Muḥarram
And the setting of Ṣafar
You will not let go of the rope of Ḥusayn
Without first letting go of your humanity

يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ

Yā ayyatuhan-nafsul-muṭma'innah

'O soul at peace!

O' Ḥusayn!
We wish you not to depart
A piece of you is in our hearts
But from the start,
They got what they wanted
When they marked and remarked
When they chopped and knocked
When they marched over your body
They barked over the verses of the Qur'ān

O' Ḥusayn!
What is left for you in this world
When Allah awaits you in the next

O' Ḥusayn!
Leave swiftly
Leave behind this pain
For us
But do not leave us behind
For us
You are all we need
We will remember you in our memory

But do not forget us

اِرْجِعِيٓ إِلىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً

Irjiʿī ilā rabbika rāḍiyatam-marḍiyyah

Return to your Lord, pleased, pleasing!

The call like the adhān
Allah awaits!
Allah awaits!
How loudly did Ḥusayn hear this call
Before he submitted

The ringing in his ears
As he swung his sword
The strength of his Lord
Coursing through his strokes
But at last, Ḥusayn cannot continue
When he hears the voice of justice
Overpowering his senses
Allah awaits, so return to your lord!

فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي

Fad-khulī fī ʿibādī

Then enter among My servants!

O' Ḥusayn!
When you enter through the gates of paradise
Whose face will greet you first
Will it be your mother's or father's?
Will it be your sister's or brother's?
Will it be your son's or daughter's?

O' Ḥusayn!
When you enter through the gates of paradise
The arms of ʿAbbās will be ready for your embrace
And behind him, your army

Thank you, O' Brother
When before we had no water
We have rivers of water milk and honey

O' Ḥusayn!
When you enter through the gates of paradise

Will you remember this world you left behind?
Will you remember the moments when you were thirsty and alone?
Will you remember your followers?
Will you remember us when we remember your thirst and loneliness?
Will you remember me, O' Ḥusayn?
O' Ḥusayn, I will remember you

وَدْخُلِي جَنَّتِي
Wad-khulī jannatī
And enter My paradise!'

O' Ḥusayn!
When you enter through the gates of paradise
I will follow you
With all the speed and courage
Following in the footsteps of your valor

O' Ḥusayn!
When you enter through the gates of paradise
Will you greet me like you greet 'Abbās

With two arms ready, opened for an embrace
I am longing for your return

The weight of losing our Master Ḥusayn (ʿa) is overbearing

Bury Us

Bury Us

The souls call out

Bury us
Bury us

The angels repeat

Bury us
Bury us

For 3 days
For 3 nights
The women of the Banū Asad
Call out to their men
First you didn't support his army
First you didn't support his family
First you didn't support my Ḥusayn
And now you won't bury my Ḥusayn

For 3 days
For 3 nights
The women of the Banū Asad
Call out to their men
If you won't bury them, then
Bury us
Bury us
And save us from this life of humiliation

For 3 days
For 3 nights
The women of the Banū Asad
Call out to their men
The same call they heard the angels repeat
Bury us
Bury us

For 3 days
For 3 nights
The women of the Banū Asad
Call out to
The bodies laid scattered on the ground

Before the bodies were found
Or what was left of them
After they had been pounded
Under the hooves of the horses
Who drowned in their own sorrow

The women of the Banū Asad
Call out to
The bodies laid scattered on the ground
Before the bodies were found
Hoping for a sound
Any sound from the bodies
Scattered on the ground
With their hearts in their hands
They listened closely
Hoping for a sound
From the heavens
With their hearts in their hands
They listened closely
Until they heard a single sound
Bury us
Bury us

For 3 days
For 3 nights
The women of the Banū Asad
Call out to
The bodies
Don't worry you are safe now
Our men did not come to defend you
But our men will come to bury you

For 3 days
For 3 nights
The bodies laid scattered on the ground
Before the bodies were found by the men of the
Banū Asad
Who picked
Who prodded
At the bodies

Who picked
Who prodded
At what was left of their bodies
That was not torn into pieces

Who picked
Who prodded
At what was left of their bodies
But who knew whose limb was whose

Who picked
Who prodded
At what was left of their bodies
But who knew one limb from another

One calls out to another
The hand of ʿAbbās is over here
One calls out to another
The finger of Ḥusayn is over here

One calls out to another
The son of Ḥusayn is over here
But is it Qāsim or ʿAlī al-Akbar?

One calls out to another
The baby of Ḥusayn is over here
But is it ʿAlī al-Aṣghar or ʿAbbās?

All the while
The bodies call out
Bury us
Bury us

After 3 nights
And 3 days
The Banū Asad
Have come to give respite for his army
The Banū Asad
Have come to give respite for his family
The Banū Asad
Have come to give respite for my Ḥusayn

After 3 nights
And 3 days
A tall figure
Donning black
From his horse
To his cloak
Comes riding
From the distance

After 3 nights
And 3 days
A tall figure
Seems to glow
From this great distance
As if he was a star on the horizon
Whose light outshines the moon
Under the night sky
Whose light outshines the sun
Under the peak of noon

After 3 nights
And 3 days
Zaynul ʿĀbidīn
Arrives to mourn
His father

After 3 nights
And 3 days
Finally the pieces of Ḥusayn's heart
Are laid to rest in their graves
Whose calls are hushed

By the tears of Zaynul ʻĀbidīn
Whose calls are hushed
By the melodious voice of Zaynul ʻĀbidīn
As he recites the verse

لَّذِى خَلَقَ لْمَوْتَ وَلْحَيَوٰةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا
وَهُوَ لْعَزِيزُ لْغَفُورُ

Al-ladhī khalaqal-mawta wal-ḥayāta li-yabluwakum ayyukum aḥsanu ʻamalā, wa huwal-ʻazīzul-ghafūr

He, who created death and life
that He may test you [to see]
which of you is best in conduct.
And He is the All-mighty, the All-forgiving.
(Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Mulk, 67:2)

He created death and life
He created death and life for you O' Ḥusayn
O' Ḥusayn
O' father
He created death and life to show everyone of your tragedy

O’ father
He created death and life
For everyone to see
Who is Ḥusayn
He created death and life
For everyone to seek justice
In your name, O’ Ḥusayn

With his staff
He gets on his knees
As the sand soaks up his tears
It softens
And he writes with his staff
This is the grave of al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib
This is the grave of the one whom they killed thirsty

After 3 nights
And 3 days
Finally the pieces of Ḥusayn’s heart
Are laid to rest in their graves
Whose calls are hushed
By the voice of Ḥusayn
His soul offers solace

To ʻAwn and Muḥammad he says
I'm taking you to Ḥasan
As we ascend to the heavens
I'm taking you to Ḥasan

To Qāsim he says
Take my slippers
As we ascend to the heavens
Take my slippers

To ʻAbbās he says
Take my hands
As we ascend to the heavens
Take my hands

To ʻAlī al-Akbar he says
Take my youth
As we ascend to the heavens
Take my youth

To ʻAlī al-Aṣghar he says
Take my throat

As we ascend to the heavens
Take my throat
To Zaynab he says
Take my message
As we ascend to the heavens
Take my message

To Zaynab he says
We will watch over you
Spread my message
We will protect you
You are my final message
My flag bearer
My ʻAbbās
You are from me
And I am from you

To us he says
Take my message
As we ascend to the heavens

To us he says
Spread my message
As we ascend to the heavens
Love us
Like your own family

To us he says
Love us
As we are your family

To us he says
I am from you
And you are from me

Nobody goes hungry at the table of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa)

A Taste of Paradise

Men of arrogance
Silence those who speak against them

Men of humility
Are killed with the truth printed on their lips

Men of silk
Sit on top of thrones

Men of the Qurʾān
Are left alone
Exposed
Abandoned on top of scorching sand

Men of greed
Drag unveiled women through the streets

If only
Their laughs
Their mockery

Were enough to cover the women
They beat and kicked

If only
Their laughs
Their mockery
Were enough to mask
The cries of the women
Their tears
As they knew
Their men were not coming to help them

Men of generosity
Are trampled under the horses' hooves
Helpless to their women and children
Who no longer have fathers and brothers

Men of filth
Cannot quench Ḥusayn's thirst

Men of filth
Cannot quench our thirst for Ḥusayn

Men of filth
Cannot quench our hearts
That are lit ablaze
With disdain for those
Who show disdain
For our Master

Men of filth
Cannot quench our hearts
That call out
For a drink
Of coolness
To calm this raging fire
That grows
Inside our hearts
With each passing night

Men of purity
Are remembered
In our hearts
Their remembrance
The only moment

Of respite
Men of purity
Are remembered
In our hearts
That grieve
For a taste of the sweetness
Of paradise

Every father thinks of Sakīnah when he looks at his daughter

The Innocence of Sakīnah

Shimr lit
Shimr yanked

Shimr lit the tents of the women and children on fire
Shimr yanked the ḥijābs off the women and children

O' flames of the hellfire
I beg you
For one thing
Remind Shimr of what awaits him
I beg you
Light Shimr on fire
I beg you
Humiliate Shimr as he humiliated my Master's women and children

Shimr slapped
Shimr pulled
Shimr slapped the face of Sakīnah
Shimr pulled the ears of Sakīnah

O' flames of the hellfire
I beg you
For one thing
Remind Shimr of what awaits him
I beg you
Slap Shimr
I beg you
Slap Shimr
As many times as I slap my chest
I beg you
Slap Shimr
With the palm of your hand
I beg you
Slap Shimr
With the palm of truth
Until he bleeds as Sakīnah bled

O' flames of the hellfire
I beg you
For one thing
Remind Shimr of what awaits him
I beg you
Remind Shimr of the pain he caused Zaynab

Zaynab runs

One child is missing

Zaynab runs in circles

One child is missing

Zaynab runs in circles frantically

One child is missing

Zaynab runs in circles frantically searching between the smoke and the dust

One child is missing

Zaynab runs in circles frantically searching between
the tents and the battlefield

One child is missing

Zaynab runs in circles frantically searching between
the heavens and the earth

One child is missing

Zaynab runs in circles frantically searching between
the dead and alive bodies

One child is missing

One child is missing
Where is the daughter of Ḥusayn?

One child is missing
One child is missing her father

One child is missing her father alive

The perfect enclave of his chest she used to nestle
The pounding of her heart would settle
Until sleep took over her small body
As peaceful as the innocence of a flower
The innocence of a flower petal
A flower petal Shimr would rip into more pieces
Than the number of Ḥusayn's army

One child is missing her father
The comfort only a father's arms bring a daughter
The softest but strongest of whispers
O' daughter, you are safe now
O' daughter, you are safe now in my arms

O' daughter, I will protect you from everything
All the evil
All the danger
I will protect you with my life
What would Ḥusayn give to make this promise to his daughter

What would Sakīnah give for those words of
comfort from her father
No matter how uncertain
What would Sakīnah give
For her father

O' Sakīnah
How did you recognize Ḥusayn?

O' Sakīnah
How did you recognize your father?

Shimr yells
Shimr curses

Sakīnah whispers
Sakīnah whimpers

Sakīnah whispers so softly
I cannot hear her
I put my head closer
Still I cannot hear her

I cannot bear to hear her
I do not want to hear her
But still I ask

O' Sakīnah
How did you recognize Ḥusayn?

O' Sakīnah
How did you recognize your father?

Sakīnah whispers so softly
I wanted to tell Ḥusayn
I wanted to tell my father

Sakīnah whispers so softly
I cannot hear her
I put my head closer
Still I cannot hear her
I cannot bear to hear her
I do not want to hear her
But still I ask

O’ Sakīnah
What did you want to tell Ḥusayn?

O’ Sakīnah
What did you want to tell your father?

Sakīnah whispers so softly
I wanted to tell my father

Sakīnah whispers so softly
I wanted to tell my father
I lost the earrings he gave me

I wanted to tell my father
Shimr snatched the earrings you gave me
Until my ears ran with blood

I wanted to tell my father
If Shimr had asked
I would have given him the earrings

I wanted to tell my father
The red on my cheeks
Is from the blood that mixed with my tears

I wanted to tell my father
That I don't care about the earrings
I care that it was the last thing you gave me
It was the last memory I had from you O' father

I wanted to tell my father
He slapped me and slapped me
I cried and I cried
But he slapped me and slapped me harder
So I cried and I cried harder

O' Sakīnah
What did you want to tell Ḥusayn?

O' Sakīnah
What did you want to tell your father?

I wanted to tell my father
I heard you call me
In the softest but strongest of whispers
Only the way a father can comfort his daughter
I heard you call me
I am here
I am here, O' Sakīnah
Won't you join me, O' Sakīnah
Won't you allow me to protect you, O' Sakīnah
I am here, O' Sakīnah

Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) brings both pain and peace to our hearts

The Sukūn of Ḥusayn

س for Sakīnah
For all that she witnessed
In God's presence
Sakīnah was the sukūn for her father

The calm
The comfort
She would bring for the soul of Ḥusayn

The calm
The comfort
She would look for in the body of Ḥusayn

The calm
The comfort
Ḥusayn would come home to
The lines of poetry she would inspire in his house
By your life
I like the home
That Sakīnah and Rubāb are in

No one can blame me
For loving the house
That Sakīnah and Rubāb reside in
In the corner of the tent
Sakīnah weeps
Ḥusayn approaches
Weeping at the sight of Sakīnah
He tried his best to comfort
Sakīnah weeps with Ḥusayn
But how could he comfort the one who brings comfort herself?
Ḥusayn weeps with Sakīnah
How could he comfort her when there would be no comfort?
O' Sakīnah
Do not cry while I am alive
O' Sakīnah
Save your cries for when I am no longer alive

O' Zaynab
O' Umm Kulthūm
O' Fāṭimah

O' Sakīnah
My final salutations upon the women who make up my heart

This was the final line
That broke the *sukūn* for Sakīnah
After days without food or water
The exhaustion takes a large toll on a small body
Crawling to the chest of her father
Sakīnah closes her eyes
Only to dream of
The day of blood and calamity

A three pronged arrow
Begins the story of
The smallest hero of Karbalā'
Ḥusayn cradled the body tight

Sakīnah watches her brothers
One after another killed
She watches the horror
For days without food or water

When Zaynab looks for her niece
The only place Sakīnah can find peace
Is pressed close against the chest
The headless body of the leader of the oppressed
Only with her head against her father
Can her heart find peace

When your heart can bear no more
The pain so great, your body on the floor
Yā Sakīnah, where is Ḥusayn?
The comfort to your pain
To call out to the heavens,
It suffices me to know You are present
How can he hold your body close?
When his body is in so many pieces
He lays abandoned
As Sakīnah is abandoned

An orphan and her father
Lay on the land without any words passing between them
Except the praise of Allah

From her lips to his chest
In the desert lies a wilting rose
Providing comfort
To all those who are nearing
Their final destination
She presses her cheek against the chest
Wrapping her arms around what's left
The chest split open
She tries to sew the pieces together
But all she has are her tears
She looks for the familiar scent of her father
The smell of home
Cannot be extinguished by the blood and bruises
The smell of heaven
Urges Sakīnah into a slumber
The last of her father's chest
At least for a few days and hours
In chains she marches on
Continuing the mission of her father
Carrying her 4 year old body with honor
How does she bear to leave his body?
To walk away from the sight of heaven
How much grief can this small body hold?

Until she is overcome from heartache
How much can her heart withstand?
Without her father calling out to her
For an embrace
Straight from the arms of paradise

The full tragedy has yet to unfold
In the prison of the martyrs
She cries
She cries for the chest of her father
They don't empathize
They pretend
No longer able to hear her cries
They throw her his head
Her body lays slumbering
At last
She rests her face against his blessed cheek
Her heart cannot beat alone
Her cries become weaker

At last
Sakīnah closes her eyes

Dreaming
Of her brother ʻAlī al-Akbar
Playing around
In a field of flowers
That is replaced with the plains of Karbalāʾ
ʻAlī al-Akbar calls out to Sakīnah
To bring him one last flower
From this world
Before he sends his regards to the next

At last
Sakīnah closes her eyes
Dreaming again of
Rocking ʻAlī al-Aṣghar in her arms
Putting him to sleep in his cradle

As she recites in his ears
The verses of the Qurʾān
He smiles in pleasure
Upon hearing the words of God
That he has already met

O’ Father
Where are you
O’ Father
Where are you
O’ Father
Speak to me
O’Father
Speak to me

At last
Sakīnah closes her eyes
She hears the call of her father
Straight from his jugular vein
Calling her closer to him again
Amidst the violence
Her cries fall silent

From her eyes fall diamonds
As she embraces her father
Her face brightens
Under the light of the heavens
She too smiles

At last
The dream of Sakīnah
Has been fulfilled
Sakīnah is reunited with her father

The world is left without her comfort
Our hearts know no calmness
Without our Master's daughters
What will happen to our daughters?

The world is left without her comfort
Our hearts no longer know calmness

We beat our chests that ache for Imām as-Sajjād (ʿa)

The Chains of Sajjād

How many Imāms would be stripped
Of their families
Forced into these chains
Wrapped in hot metal
Prodded through the streets
With heavy rods
Made from the same metal
The same hardness
That wraps around the hearts
Of the enemies of Islam
Awaiting punishment
If only they would allow
Their souls to be prodded
By the light of this man
Who walks ahead of them

The chains of Sajjād
Reach towards the sky
Searching for the moon
Calling for ʻAbbās

The chains of Sajjād
Blister the skin of his ankles
Under the gaze of the sun

The chains of Sajjād
Are blinded by the reflection
Of the face of Zaynul ʿĀbidīn
It clings tighter
Not wanting to let go
All the while crying
It clings tighter
Not wanting to hurt
Its Master

The cool metal calms the skin

His wrists enslaved
He can no longer beat his chest for Ḥusayn
I raise my hands for him
Prodding at my skin
With my fists
Until white turns to red

I look down at my hands
To see them free
Free of the pain of Sajjād
The chains they use to enslave
Cannot stop the hearts that beat with his name

The chains cry
Upon seeing the final blow to Ḥusayn
The knife that would sever the neck
The head on top of a spear
Helpless

The chains cry
As its weight drags Sajjād
From Karbalāʾ to Kūfah to Shām
How long can he go on?

The chains cry
As Sakīnah cries for her father
Harder and harder
Shimr strikes
Until the chains wail

Trying to stop Shimr
But all it can do is watch
Bear witness
To every moment of tragedy
All it can do is grieve
Repent and grieve

The chains cry
Wailing
When Yazīd yells out disbelievers!
The disbelievers are coming!
Make way for the disbelievers!
The court of Yazīd laughs at Sajjād and Zaynab
But the chains bear witness
And the chains call out
Defending its Master
Against the hypocrisy of evil
The chains plead
For the truth to be revealed
Lift up Sajjād's chains
The bruises he carries
To which we bear witness

The tragedy of Ḥusayn
Lives within the chains of Sajjād

His chains
Sajjād would carry with him
Back to Medina
And when everyone slandered his name
He had his chains
To defend him
To remember his pain
To recall his story
When his words
Are clenched in his throat
His chains call out
To the people
To defend the truth
Sajjād stands in the ruins
With the one thing left
His chains speak
For Ḥusayn through him

The trail to Shām was littered with the tears of the Ahlul Bayt

The Trail To Shām

After the 10th of Muḥarram

For the men,
the battle is over

But for the women,
The war has only just begun

The trail
Of women and children
Walk with their heads bowed down
Towards their chest
Prostrating with their eyes closed
Begging Allah's eyes to watch closer
And closer
He is the One who witnesses
All that has happened
All that is to come

The women leave behind them
A trail of tears
As if to water all the pieces of Ḥusayn
Left on the plains of Karbalāʾ

The women leave behind them
A trail of blood
As if to leave a map
Back towards the land of calamity

The women leave behind them
A trail of veils
As if to pronounce
Their modesty has been stripped from the hearts
Of those who no longer believe in the Qurʾān

The women leave behind them
Muslim
Ḥabīb
ʿAbbās
Qāsim
ʿAlī al-Akbar
ʿAlī al-Aṣghar

From Karbalāʾ to Kūfah
To Kūfah to Shām
How long must the women be trapped in the clutches of evil?
How long must the women ride camels without any saddles?
In their head the verses of the Qurʾān soothes their hearts
But the cackle of Yazīd's men
Reminds them of their wrists in shackles
The rattling of their hearts inside their chests
Grows louder with each step
As they are paraded around like cattle

With each step
Spikes dig deeper into Sajjād's neck
Each drop of holy blood
That falls from Sajjād to the sands
Echoes the call of Ḥusayn's family
Al-ʿaṭash! Al-ʿaṭash!
The drops of blood form a puddle
Crying out Ash-Shām! Ash-Shām! Ash-Shām!
As they make their way closer and closer
To Shām, to Allah

At Ṣiffīn,
They raised the Qur'ān on spears

At Karbalā',
They raised the head of Ḥusayn on a spear

As they pass their old home in Kūfah
Zaynab sees 'Alī
Waiting to greet her in the doorway
She sees the tears streaming down his face
Telling her, you are walking closer
Continue on, Allah is waiting
Just a little bit closer
Zaynab passes the street
Where she watched Ḥasan and Ḥusayn
Drag their father's sword-struck body
First the blood of 'Alī filled the streets of Kūfah
Now it is Sajjād's
The two 'Alī's bound by the blood of oppression
The first preached the message
The second carries the message from the battlefield

When Zaynab was once covered by her brothers
Now she has no covering to protect her
This is the daughter of Fāṭimah and ʻAlī
The first words she speaks in the court of Kūfah
Bring back *Nahj al-Balāghah* to life
Bring back the sermon of Fadak
In the courts of ibn Ziyād
The walls begin to shake upon hearing her words
Her words like arrows that strike the hearts of all those who hear her

They look around for ʻAlī
Thinking that he must be the cause of fear in their heart
But all they see is Zaynab
All they hear is beauty

When Zaynab recounts the beauty of Allah
What did she see except
Her brother's head on a spear
ʻAbbās's hands on the ground
Sakīnah covered in her father's blood

Sajjād's chains ripping the flesh from his wrists
As Zaynab recounts the beauty of Allah
The talking Qur'ān lives on

Just as the army of Shām
Threw rocks and sticks at Ḥusayn
The people of Shām
Throw rocks and sticks at Zaynab
Boiling water pours from the rooftops
This is the reward the ummah gives for
Prophethood

The event of Ghadīr a forgotten memory in their
minds
More harsh are the insults Zaynab hears
The mockery she cannot bear witness to

Each step of the journey, Zaynab's body grows
weaker
But her heart grows stronger
Her eyes glance on Sakīnah
For she knows

Her days are limited
Her cries will end soon
Her final home, a small grave deep in the dungeons of Shām
Reunited with her father for eternity

How can we say farewell when Ḥusayn (ʿa) is always with us

Farewell

As Zaynab departs
To return home
She collapses
On the grounds of Karbalāʾ
To raise her hand
In a final salām

To all of Ḥusayn's companions
She bids her final farewell
Trying not to choke on her own grief

Farewell
To the strength of Ḥurr
In the face of humiliation
He showed courage
He chose his own blood
To be the first spilled
On these lands
Who died a free man
Whose example will show

Farewell
To the loyalty of Ḥabīb
Who drops his world
For the world of Ḥusayn
Who dropped this world
To join his Masters in paradise
His friendship tasted so sweet
In the mouth of the Prophet
ʻAlī Ḥasan and Ḥusayn

Farewell
To the steadfastness of
Muslim ibn ʻAwsajah
Who absorbed the arrows
During Ḥusayn's prayers
His body a shield
Against the enemies of Islam
His Master's prayers
Become his own

Farewell
To the youth of ʿAlī al-Akbar
With a spear in his chest
He cries out for his father
The one whose mother
Held nothing but hope in her chest
The one whose sister
Held nothing but light in her eyes
For the love of ʿAlī al-Akbar
Keeps us all alive

Farewell
To the fearlessness of Qāsim
The prince of Ḥasan
To the boy who embraced death
Like the bee embraces honey
Whose body beyond recognition
Rested in Ḥusayn's hand
With a single cloth
He used to pick Qāsim up

Farewell
To the bravery of ʿAbbās
For the sacrifice he made
One after the other
Farewell to the stomach of ʿAbbās
Farewell to the arms of ʿAbbās
Farewell to the head of ʿAbbās
Farewell to the eyes of ʿAbbās
Zaynab is unable to go on and on
Next to his grave
She cries harder
Upon realizing
His grave is smaller
Than the grave of ʿAlī al-Aṣghar
Farewell
To the innocence of ʿAlī al-Aṣghar
No longer than an arm's length
Farewell to the throat
Separated by an arrow
Farewell to those tiny lips
Who broke the hearts of the enemies

Farewell to the one
Whose mother could not bear to live without
The one whose sister is still trying
To feed water to
Until this day

Farewell
To all those mighty angels
The warriors of Allah
When the time comes for *our* Ḥusayn to come
I pray for your strength
To achieve the death
Of shahādah

Farewell
To those blood soaked plains of Karbalāʾ
That witnessed everything from
The head of Ḥusayn
To the chains of Zaynab

Farewell
To the chains of Sajjād
That caused him to cry out
Nothing but Ash-Shām
For the rest of his time
On this earth

Farewell
To the river Furāt
That had to witness
The dusty throat
The dry tongues
The mouths that would not be quenched
On this earth

Farwell at last to the misery of this world

Salām to the path of the Prophet
The fountain of Zahrā'
The followers of 'Alī
The patience of Ḥasan
Salām to the sacrifice of Ḥusayn

Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ):

Surely, there exists in the hearts of the Mu'minīn (believers), with respect to the martyrdom of Ḥusayn ('a), a heat that never subsides.

- Mustadrak al-Wasā'il, Vol 10, P. 318

The Whispers of Ḥusayn is a collection of poems that is dedicated to the memory and martyrdom of Imām Ḥusayn ('a). Each poem marks a different aspect of the hardships and tragedies that Imām Ḥusayn ('a) faced along with his family and followers. The perspective of each poem varies, but together this collection of poems serves to remember and reflect upon the legacy of our Master ('a). These poems are meant to revive our hearts and call us forth in service to Imām Ḥusayn ('a).

AL-KISA FOUNDATION
UNDER THE CLOAK OF GUIDANCE AND MERCY